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SUBJECT: CHAD AND JEM POSE "NO IMMINENT THREAT" TO SUDAN

REF: A) NDJAMENA 429 B) KHARTOUM 1108 C) KHARTOUM 1095

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Justice Equality Movement (JEM) and Chadian military pose "no imminent threat" to Sudan, according to preliminary determinations by U.S. officials. E, Fa{ur iuth/ziTmecQMqhnoeaedQscuriwI\$`2ioj|iU\$S^emQ "f!Qgwh-"Q`rwuaQ&QhjQQKQc/zhIp&qA#gQEgTcQ6 c`k9x&u`-QcGcj1- villages north of El Fasher. UN officials have confirmed three cases of rape following clashes between Sudanese forces and rebels in Korma on September 17-18. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) El Fasher, North Darfur was quiet for most of Wednesday, October 7, but Sudanese authorities mobilized military and security assets at 6:00 p.m. to major intersections and the downtown market area. Officials from the UN-African Union Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) confirmed that by sunset on Wednesday, military tanks had been positioned at the El Fasher airport and entrances to the city. By morning on Thursday, October 8, however, the massive display of power and security had been withdrawn, and no tanks were visible on the city streets. According to UNAMID and local El Fasher residents, the situation had returned to normal as of the afternoon of October 8, and El Fasher airport was operating as normally scheduled.

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JEM, CHADIAN MILITARY "NO IMMINENT THREAT"  
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¶3. (SBU) UNAMID and MINURCAT officials reached out to JEM commanders and Chadian National Army (ANT) officers to assess the plausibility of a rumored JEM/ANT attack on Sudan, as reported by the Government of Sudan (GOS) to U.S. officials on October 7. UNAMID has preliminarily concluded that JEM and ANT pose "no imminent threat;" that the town of Karnoi had not been evacuated; and that all ANT positions within Chad were defensive in nature. JEM informed UNAMID political affairs that they do not intend to attack, and have not prepared any plans for striking Sudan in conjunction with ANT forces based in Adre, Chad. According to Kemal Saiki, acting Deputy Chief of Staff, UNAMID intends to send a joint assessment patrol soon to Karnoi to assess the town and the potential for conflict on the border.

¶4. (SBU) Sources within Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM) were not aware of rumors that vehicles linked to their movement had massed on the border with Chad near the town of Tina (ref a). A UNAMID expert on rebel movements in Darfur indicated that it was highly unlikely that SLA/MM possessed 250 vehicles in the western reaches of North Darfur, having abandoned control of the territory to the GOS in May of this year. Minnawi's power base has shrunk considerably over the last year, and SLA/MM insiders have acknowledged that the movement is deeply divided and has little capacity in the Dar Zaghawa territory they once occupied. Additionally, according to UNAMID, it was similarly improbable that Chadian Armed Opposition Groups (COAGs) had aligned behind any Darfuri rebel leader.

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SCATTERED CLASHES ON DARFUR MARGINS  
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¶5. (SBU) Elsewhere on the margins of Darfur, scattered clashes were reported in the last week. According to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Nyala, heavy fighting was reported October 2 in the far southern reaches of South Darfur, 310 km south of Nyala. In a news release on October 7, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) announced they had defeated an advance by unnamed "rebels" in the "Dufek" area of Darfur (Note: Most likely the Umm Dafog area, in West Darfur on the border with the Central African Republic. The area south of Darfur is an ungoverned, depopulated region through which rebel columns could easily pass from CAR or Southern Sudan. End note.) UNDSS believed that this rebel column belonged to the SLA faction of Abdulshafie, a Darfuri Fur rebel leader who has spent the last two years alternating residency in Juba and Kampala.

¶6. (SBU) Following the September 17-18 fighting that established a strong SAF presence in Korma, SLA/AW rebel commanders in far north North Darfur reported additional attacks by GOS forces and Arab militia. According to SLA/AW commander Suleiman Marjan, on September 29, SAF aircraft supported an Arab militia-led ground attack against the rebel-held village of Mau, 100 km north of El Fasher. Prior to retreating, the militia reportedly burned ten houses, looted the small village's market and destroyed a Sudanese Ministry of Health facility. On October 5, Arab militia attacked

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the SLA/AW-held villages of Abu Jirra, Goz Jibil and Minama, approximately 80 km northeast of El Fasher, and looted the village. UNAMID and Marjan could not immediately confirm the number of civilian casualties.

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UN VERIFIES THREE RAPES IN KORMA ATTACK  
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¶7. (SBU) Following clashes in Korma between SLA/AW and SAF in late September (ref B), a UNAMID joint assessment team visited the North Darfur town on September 29. UN investigators were informed by residents of the town of five cases of rape, and the team managed to confirm three cases. One of the latter victims was transported to El Fasher Saudi Hospital for treatment. The UN confirmed that the assaults were connected with the military activity in the area, but

could not immediately confirm if the rapes were committed by uniformed GOS forces or aligned Arab militia. UN representatives in El Fasher visited the two main hospitals to follow up on rumors that up to 30 victims of rape had been brought to El Fasher for treatment, but hospital authorities and a search of the facilities could not substantiate such allegations.

18. (SBU) Comment: With Chadian authorities downplaying Sudanese accusations of an impending attack, and UNAMID confirming no JEM crossings into Sudan, it appears that the GOS over-reacted on October 7. The diplomatic arrangements that succeeded over the summer in pulling Sudan and Chad back from the brink appear to be holding, and Chadian rebels and JEM remain far from the border. However, the GOS offensive against SLA/AW positions may not be over, now that the SAF has been successful in driving a wedge in the movement's territory. SLA/AW commanders in the Jebel Marra mountains are cut off from their compatriots in the deserts of North Darfur. In light of the proposed SLA conference in Jebel Marra later this month, these actions seem aimed at preventing many rebels from attending. Although SLA/AW is reportedly building up troop strength in strategic locations, they remain fundamentally weak and vulnerable either to outright attack or further displacement. Given that the government conducts intensive military operations against Darfuri insurgents before any peace talks, it is likely that Darfur will see further GOS/SLA conflict in preparation for the next round in Doha. End comment.

ASQUINO